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#### HAVE SOME SENSE, GENTLEMEN.

Mayor Suprenant has returned without his approval the ordinance passed at the last session of the council authorizing the committee on public property to advertise for bids for the present city hall and the site upon which it stands. The mayor says in his veto message that he believes the price fixed upon the property, \$15,000, is too low, and that there is a general demand for a more costly building than has heretofore been contemplated by the council. He suggests that action be deferred until such time as the city is financially able to erect a suitable building.

The common council is rapidly making no progress. During the past four or five months it has undertaken several proposals, and in almost every instance it has failed miserably to accomplish the ends sought. The greatest fiasco was the city hall muddle, which has made the council ridiculous in the eyes of the community. The mayor's veto of the ordinance will stand, for the reason that three members of the council will unquestionably vote to sustain it. The killing of this measure will settle the city hall proposal for some time. So it has been with the general demand for a dumping ground. The committee on public property selected a tract belonging to the city, but upon the filing of a remonstrance the proposal was dropped. Of course, the dumping ground proposal is off in a thousand places.

Even so inconsequential a matter as purchase of a typewriter, it will be recalled, proved entirely beyond the administrative capacity of our municipal guardians, who were compelled to abandon the project. Provision for heating the office of the chief of police was so stupendously bewildering that the councilmen deliberately side-stepped it, preferring to have the city pay \$30 or \$40 a month for gas heat rather than tackle the proposition. The present council is making for itself a record of which the members will have scant reason to feel proud when they retire again to the modest life of private citizens. In years to come they will look back over the records of the municipality and contemplate the many things they have not accomplished and the very few proposals which they have carried to a successful issue. They have wasted weeks in their persistent pursuit of phantoms, and it is about time they ceased this kill-o'-the-wisp legislation.

Members of the city council may attribute their failures to several factors. In the first place, they fail to get together. New proposals are unexpectedly sprung at council meetings and opposition develops that engenders more or less hard feeling. One of the elements in the council is numerically strong enough to pass such measures as it deems necessary, but it not infrequently occurs that even the majority goes to pieces. The minority, which supports the course of the mayor, is strong enough to sustain vetoes and thus thwart the will of the majority.

The contention in the council results from the abuse of the power delegated one member to defeat prompt action through suspension of the rules. Seven of the eight members at present in the council frequently favor some proposal which does not meet with the approval of the remaining member, who blocks action by refusing to agree to suspension. In exceptional cases this sort of thing may be entirely proper, but as a rule it indicates remarkably poor judgment on the part of the solitary member casting the negative vote. Naturally some feeling follows, and members of the council drift hopelessly apart, with the inevitable result that nothing is accomplished. In view of the fact that councilmen are merely agents of the city, it would seem that they should get onto themselves.

So far as the city hall proposition is concerned the mayor is quite right. To build another barn such as we have now would be deliberate waste of the people's money. Astoria needs a new city hall, but it cannot afford to erect a structure such as that recently proposed. The city is a permanent insti-

tution and its improvements should be of a permanent character.

#### LATIN AS AN AID TO ENGLISH.

The English, as a rule employ words with a finer feeling for the niceties of meaning than do the Americans, as a people, and the explanation of this lies probably in the fact that all English schools and universities, until very recent years, insisted on the study of Latin and Greek. Whether the institution of "modern sides" in most of the English public schools will effect precision of speech in England is a problem that must wait for an answer. American schools have never made so much of "the classics" as have the English schools, and this policy may be defended by many sound, strong arguments. But it is indisputable that a man who possesses a fair knowledge of Latin and Greek—especially Latin—will use English more accurately—other things being equal—than a man who lacks that knowledge. Of course, there are a number of writers who, though totally ignorant of those dead tongues, use English with exquisite precision. The rule is subject to many exceptions. And there are many who have been put through a course of Latin and Greek with no perceptible gain in the art of using English words. Some people are born without a sense for perceiving linguistic niceties, just as others are born without a sense for good music.

Some writers affect the "good old Saxon simplicity" in words, but in this, if extremists, they are quite as far in error as any imitator of the Johnsonese dialect, the San Francisco Bulletin believes. English is neither pure Saxon nor pure Latin and Greek. It is a thorough blend and mixture of the two. The Norman word has become as English as the Norman baron. It has as much right in our English tongue as any word of pure Saxon derivation. In fact, without the Latin and Greek, derivatives English would be a bare, poor speech, inadequate for the converse of civilized people.

And yet, since there are two sides to every argument, it is also the fact that knowledge of other tongues sometimes impairs the idiomatic raciness of a man's own, native speech. William Matthews quotes Schiller as saying that he read no more than was necessary in foreign languages because it was his business to write German, and he thought that by reading other languages he should lose his nicer perceptions of what belonged to his own. But German is not so composit a language as English. Many writers from the time of Cicero, have remarked that women speak their native tongue most purely because they know no other. "A man who thinks a knowledge of Latin essential to the purity of English diction," said Macaulay, "either has never conversed with an accomplished woman or does not deserve to have conversed with her." Bunyan wrote racier, finer prose than the pedantic Milton. "Gulliver's Travels" is a better book than "Rasselas."

Scientists are the worst offenders against Saxon simplicity. They persist upon falling back upon the dead languages for scientific terms, for the reason that these terms will thus be identical in all languages an intelligible to all learned men. Many words, once confined exclusively to scientific jargon, are now in ordinary circulation. Anent the adoption of scientific expressions into the common speech Punch once established a clever bit of verse whose merit, more than its pertinency here, is an excuse for reprinting it:

'I love thee, Mary, and thou lovest me.  
 Our mutual flame is like the affinity  
 That doth exist between two simple bodies.  
 I am Potassium to thine Oxygen.  
 \* \* \* Sweet, thy name is Briggs,  
 And mine is Johnson. Wherefore should not we  
 Agree to form a Johnsonate of Briggs?  
 We will. The day, the happy day is nigh,  
 When Johnson shall with beauteous Briggs combine.'

Every dollar sent away from Astoria is a dollar lost. The trade-at-home spirit is what makes communities. Patriotic Astorians, besides getting the greatest value for their money, will likewise advance the interests of their own city by supporting The Astorian's 1904 directory. Local men are employed in its publication and their salaries are spent at home. The merchant who invests in The Astorian directory affords himself an opportunity of getting back some of his investment, whereas the merchant who gives his coin to outsiders sends that much money out of the city. It pays to be patriotic.

All we ever claimed for Wexford Jones is that he is a good newspaper man. That residence in Astoria should have made him proficient is merely incidental.

Jefferson Myers has sprung H.W.Scott's name for the vice-presidency. Wonder if Jeff is lately in receipt of a now-is-the-time telegram?

Every time the Japs sink a Russian vessel the average American feels like exclaiming: "Welldone-aki! Do it somemorevitch!"

#### GO TO SEATTLE TO DIE.

Unique Rate War Lends Inducement to be Buried.

Seattle, Feb. 10.—Now is a cheap time to die in Seattle. There is a rate war on among the various stables owning and renting hacks for funerals. The undertakers of the city are in on the cut.

The first of the year the leading stables and undertakers of the city formed a combine whereby they agreed to raise prices for rent of hacks for funerals. The prices were put to figure whereby they were exorbitant. For instance, \$8.50 was charged for a hack to Lake View cemetery, the nearest burial place to the city. The undertakers were to furnish the business for the hackmen, and the latter in return for the favor were to pay the undertakers 20 per cent of the amount they received.

Yesterday afternoon the superintendent of the Montana stables posted a notice that his company would withdraw from the combine, and that in the future he would charge but \$5 for hacks.

That notice has started a war whereby it is believed that in time the hackmen will be making prices so low that it will be an inducement to come to Seattle to die.

The undertakers resent the cut by

declaring that they will not send a bit of their business to the Montana stables. The latter declare that they will get the business in time any how, because persons who are burying their relatives will contract for their hacks direct from the stables, instead of going to the undertakers.

In the meantime the public is waiting anxiously to see the outcome of the unique war.

#### Wage Increase Not Popular.

New York, Feb. 10.—A proposition to raise the union rate of wages for musicians playing at summer resorts from \$25 to \$35 a week for regular members of orchestras will come up before the meeting of the Musical Mutual Protective Union next Thursday evening. Many of the union members oppose the suggestion as they are of the opinion that many proprietors of summer resorts would try to get non-union players if the plan should go into effect.

Other proposals are to increase the pay of walking delegates from \$500 to \$1000 each for the season, and to demand half pay for union musicians in cases where they are unable to play on account of rain. The last proposal is looked on with favor by the members, but the attempt to increase the pay of walking delegates is not popular.

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8:00 a m	Portland Union De-	11:10 a m
7:00 p m	pot for Astoria and Way Points	9:40 p m

**ASTORIA**

7:45 a m	For Portland and	11:30 a m
6:10 p m	Way Points	10:30 p m

**SEASIDE DIVISION**

8:15 a m	Astoria for Warren-	7:40 a m
11:35 a m	ton, Flavel Port	4:00 p m
5:50 p m	Stevens, Hammond and Seaside	10:45 a m
6:15 a m	Seaside for War-	12:50 p m
9:30 a m	renton, Flavel,	7:30 p m
2:30 p m	Hammond, Port Stevens & Astoria	9:35 a m

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